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Metaline Falls Bridge Sees Service in Montana

By JOHN J. LEMON

A bridge that was moved all the way from Metaline Falls, Wash., to Heron, Mont., will be dedicated at 11 a. m. Sunday, marking completion of an unusual modern-day engineering feat.

John Brauer, county surveyor for Sanders county, Mont., will cut the ribbon incorporating the 695-foot span over the Clark Fork river into the county road system linking Heron with U. S. highway 10-A.

Four Inland Empire firms played important roles in the job. They include Walter L. Woodward and Associates, Spokane, consulting engineer; Hansen & Parr Construction company, Spokane, which erected the piers; Roy L. Blair & Co., Spokane, superstructure contractors, and Henry Hagman, Cashmere, dismantling subcontractor.

Span 32 Years Old

The "new" bridge actually is 32 years old, having been constructed across the Pend Oreille river near Metaline Falls in 1920 as a toll bridge.

Originally it was under private ownership, but when the state highway department designated the Metaline road as a part of the state system, the state purchased the bridge in 1928.

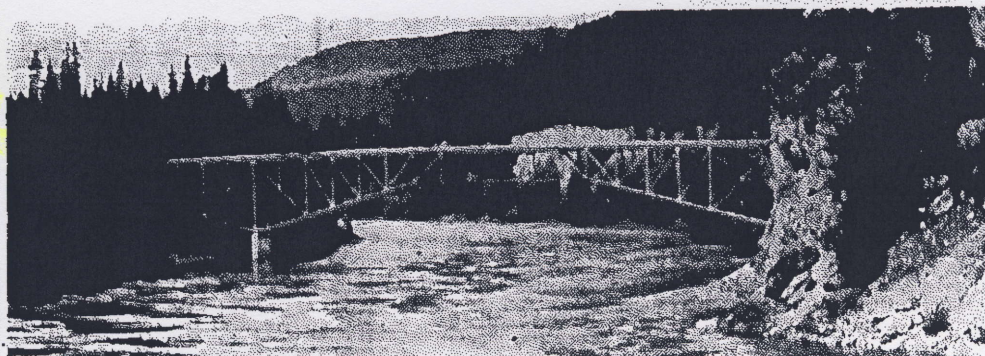
Last year, the highway department determined that the span was not sufficiently strong to carry the heavy traffic load that had developed there, and the Hagman company was given a contract to construct a new bridge adjacent to it. As a part of the contract, Hagman was to have the old span to dispose of as he wished.

In the meantime, residents of Sanders county decided to erect a bridge over the Clark Fork to shorten the distance between that region and other communities on highway 10-A.

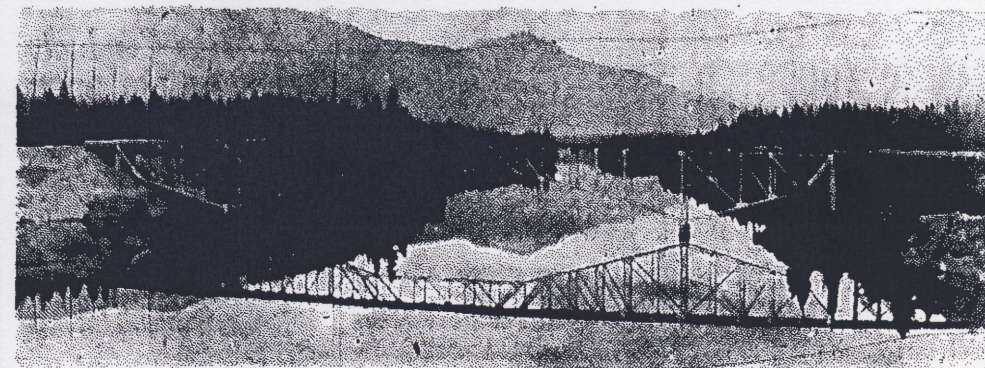
A bond issue was voted and the Woodward engineering firm was employed to start planning. About that time, however, the Washington Water Power company completed its plans for Cabinet Gorge dam, a short distance downstream from the proposed bridge site.

Cost Is Factor

It was evident that the type of bridge originally planned would be



The bridge at the old Metaline Falls site where it served for many years.



The bridge at the new Heron, Mont., site after it was moved and reassembled.

inadequate when the dam formed a lake. The power company agreed to pay for a portion of the new span, but it would have been almost impossible to erect a bridge with all new steel at a price within reason for either the county or the power company.

Woodward started searching for a means to construct a substantial bridge within reasonable costs when he opened a copy of the Chronicle in his Spokane office and saw a picture of the Metaline Falls bridge to be replaced by Hagman.

"That is the type of bridge we need," Woodward recalled he exclaimed. He wrote to Hagman for dimensions.

On a "blownup" picture of the

Heron bridge site, he drew a scale model of the Metaline span and saw that it would be perfectly suited to needs of Sanders county. Negotiations were launched and Hagman sold the bridge.

The bridge was broken down and parts disassembled exactly as they were when the bridge was originally erected. All field rivets, those required when the bridge was assembled, were sheared off, loaded into trucks and moved to Heron.

Reassembly Speeded

Reassembling the bridge got underway while parts of it still were being dismantled at Metaline.

At the same time, the bridge builders had to keep pace with the

water rising behind Cabinet Gorge dam.

The bridge's total cost of \$322,000 is said to be far less than had the Metaline Falls bridge not been available. The structure is 695 feet long of which 560 feet is a cantilever, deck-loaded steel span and 135-foot timber bent approach spans.

Center concrete piers, 360 feet apart, are 80 feet tall and were constructed as dry piers before the water was raised behind the dam.

Contract for the piers was let in August, 1951, and Hansen & Parr completed the job last June. Roy L. Blair company, awarded a contract for the superstructure last March, completed their work this month.

HUNT CONTINUES IN SNOWY WILDS

PHOENIX, Ariz., Nov. 20. (AP)—A coordinated air-ground effort to locate hunters still stranded by

It Won't Be Long Now—

'Mr. X' Back With Five XXs

The holiday season is here again.

There could be no surer evidence than the reappearance of the mysterious and very welcome Mr. X at the Volunteers of America, W28

story to Major Foulkes when he came in. But it was no new story to Foulkes. Each year, at holiday time, Mr. X makes his appearance and his donation. Last year it was 10 \$10 bills just before Thanksgiving.

CROSSING SMASH HURTS 46 ON BUS

HOUSTON, Nov. 20. (AP)—At least 46 persons were injured today as a passenger train struck a

FIVE DO

SEC forces late rocket strike for the jets MIG-1 nounced jet fig began by nav AP report total within target ridge. The after strike along Ran rocket p. m.

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BRIDGE COMPLETION AWAITING WEATHER

Awaiting completion by pouring of the deck, is the new Metaline Falls bridge, which has been under construction by Contractor Henry Hagman of Cashmere. Erection of the steel was completed a couple of weeks ago, and the suspension span is swinging free ready for the shims to be taken out. There is still a little riveting to be done and the contractor has a small crew at work at present taking out the steel sheeting and rings of the coffer dam on the east side.

Although he was beset by many unforeseen difficulties, handicapped in securing skilled labor when needed and other obstacles, Mr. Hagman speaks highly of the engineering on the job, saying that everything worked out and fit to a "T". Mr. Carnine, resident engineer in charge, when asked about the matter very modestly declined to comment, inferring, "Oh, that's nothing." Mr. Hagman, with his years of experience, evidently thinks it's something.

Old Bridge to Montana

The old bridge, when the new one is completed and put to use, will be removed and taken to Montana, where it will become a part of the Cabinet Gorge project of Washington Water Power company. It will be used to bridge a flooded area upstream. Piers at the new site in Montana are said to be already constructed.

Possession of and removal of the old bridge was included in Mr. Hagman's contract bid, and it is reported that Mr. Hagman has sold it to WWP at the present site, but it is not known whether he will remove it as removal will probably be put up for bids.

Pouring the deck of the new bridge is a matter which hinges entirely on the weather, Mr. Carnine says, but if present winter conditions continue, it may be some time yet.

JUNE 5, 1952

METALINE FALLS, I

DEDICATION PLANS ARE MOVING APACE

Plans for dedication of the Metaline Falls bridge have kept the members of the Metalines' Chamber of Commerce committee, and especially Jay R. Jones, chairman, busy and many problems have arisen—some of which are yet to be overcome.

Acceptance of invitations from notables who have been invited are coming in, and Canadian chambers of commerce are much interested in the affair, so there will no doubt be plenty of talent for the program.

Final plans for the banquet have not been made, but it is expected it will be served in the dining room of the Washington hotel.

A feature not to be overlooked, especially by the younger folks, will be the dance in the school gym in the evening. "Chuck" McCain will have charge and promises there will be a good time for all who attend.

Queen Contest

Entries in Mr. George's queen contest have been augmented by the addition of Mary Jane Aalde, sponsored by the Gift Mart, and Mary Lou Newton, by Bussard's Beauty and Barber shop. Contestants previously announced are the Misses Sharon Dahlen, Donna Perkins, Phyllis Taft, Mary Ann Jones, Roberta Kissinger.

Judges selected by Mr. George are the Mesdames Roy Bailey, E. O. Dresel Sr., McCain, Schaeffer, Davies, Tanksley and Schultz. Judging will take place at 4 p. m. Saturday, June 7th, on the schoolhouse lawn. Mrs. Arvel Hasse, secretary of the chamber, will be present and also Mrs. H. C. Moon, advisor.

Border Open by Special Arrangement

To allow Canadian visitors to remain here for the dance that evening, by special arrangement with customs and immigration officials, travel across the international border will be allowed after regular hours between 1:00 a. m. and 1:30 a. m. Sunday morning.

Considerable interest in the dedication has been manifested by Nelson and Traill, B. C. and good-sized delegations are expected from both towns.

OLD FALLS BRIDGE AGAIN IN SERVICE

The old Metaline Falls bridge, gone but not forgotten, and still adorning the front pages of Spokane newspapers, appeared on the first page of last Thursday's Spokane Chronicle, shown both in its old setting here and its new setting at Heron, Montana.

It was dedicated, or rather rededicated for use there Sunday, after having served on the old site here for 32 years, and not only that, Emil Reuther insists that before being brought here the structure was in use on the Willamette river in Oregon. However, be that as it may.

The bridge was first built as a toll bridge by the Metaline Falls Bridge company, organized by J. H. Sexsmith in 1919. The company was capitalized at \$100,000 and construction was started in 1920, with the state taking it over January 1, 1930, and making it a "free" bridge after purchasing it for \$90,788. Its cost in a report to the legislature was \$95,000, of which about \$16,000 was for engineering and promotion.

At the time Frank W. Gulbert, president of the Eastern Washington Good Roads association, insisted the price paid was at least \$30,000 too much and that a bad precedent was being set for the purchases of toll bridges in the state. However, as a comparison of prices then and now, we note that the Chronicle story says the cost of the bridge on the new site was \$322,000, which it is said was "far less than had the Metaline Falls bridge not been available."

Henry Hagman, contractor, sold the bridge to Sanders county, Montana, which was aided in the cost of moving and erection by the Washington Water Power company. Hagman received the bridge as part of the contract price for the new one he erected here.

Nov. 27, 1952

Metaline Falls Bridge

Compiled by Faith McClenny

Probably 99.99% of the people who rush across the Metaline Falls Bridge give very little thought to the bridge. Yet two bridges have played an important part in the history of the area.

Back in the early days, crossing the Pend Oreille River any time of the year, presented serious and dangerous problems with high water in spring or floating chunks of ice in winter. When both Metaline and Metaline Falls were infant communities, people used rowboats or canoes to cross the river in spring and summer or walk across the ice in winter.

From 1915 to 1918, the small Metaline launch and a barge were used to ferry people and freight across the river.

Later two old timers, Jim Nelson and Ray Bailey built and operated a ferry for a time and then sold it to the county. The Pend Oreille County operated the ferry while discussion was being held about the possibility of building a bridge.

During the winter of 1920, a franchise was granted for the construction of a toll bridge. Mr. J.H. Sexsmith, President of the Metaline Falls Bridge Co. interested the Coast Bridge Co of Seattle and Portland in the project. During March of that year, \$8,000 donations were raised from the public, \$12,000 from the county and another \$12,000 from the Forest Service. H.A. Sewell surveyed the site for the proposed bridge.

By June the bridge construction was underway in spite of delays caused by high water.



First Metaline Falls Bridge - 1920

The first Metaline Falls Bridge was completed and dedicated November 11, 1920. It was a beautiful six hundred-foot bridge constructed of fine cantilever steel resting on four concrete piers. The entrance to the bridge was a mile of new permanent

highway of decomposed lime rock

The impressive dedication was held in the middle of the bridge with classes of school children marching from their school and carrying a large flag. John P. Hartman, one of the founders of the Washington State Good Roads Association was the speaker. Following the ceremony, Mrs. Sexsmith christened the bridge.

It was a toll bridge for ten years and then was purchased by the county after the road from Newport to the Canadian Border became a State Highway. The toll was ten cents for foot passengers, \$1.50 for a single team wagon, \$2.50 for larger teams and wagons loaded with lumber.

In 1948 after years of hard use, the bridge was strengthened and for a few years became a one-way bridge. Over the years it became apparent that the old bridge would have to be replaced.

On June 14, 1952 a new bridge was dedicated in an impressive and colorful program. The new bridge was five hundred twenty feet long with a twenty-six foot roadway and a four-foot sidewalk. The deck was eighty feet above the low water mark. Henry Hagman of Casmere was the contractor and built the bridge for over \$548,615.50. The old bridge was taken down and later was erected at Heron Sanders County, Montana where it spanned the Clarksfork River.

The dedication included a mile long parade, Queen Sally Jo Olson, grade school twirlers, industrial equipment of the Pend Oreille Mines and Metals Company, Lehigh Portland Cement Company, Diamond Match, Ione Lumber Company and twenty-five members of the Z Canyon Riders Saddle Club. A color guard was made up of members of the American and Canadian Legions. The Trail B.C. bagpipers added to the ceremony.

J. A. Shaw, president of the Metalines Chamber of Commerce was master of ceremony. The main speaker was Wm. A. Bugge, State Director of Highways in the absence of Governor Langlie.

The bridge is a beautiful entrance to the town of Metaline Falls and the spectacular scenery of the area.

Credits:

The Metaline Falls News 1952

Historic Site Guides of Pend Oreille County Museum Resource Files

Photo- Pend Oreille County Historical Society.

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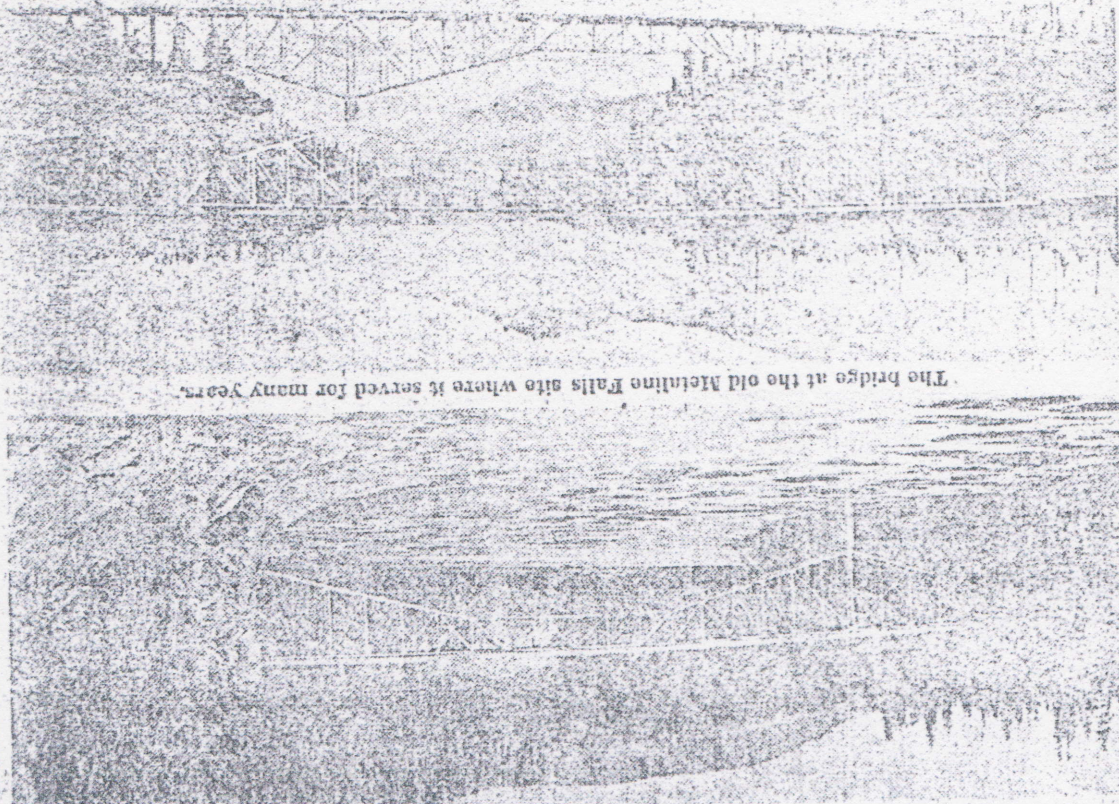
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The bridge at the old Metaline Falls site where it served for many years.



The bridge at the new Heron, Mont., site after it was moved and reassembled.

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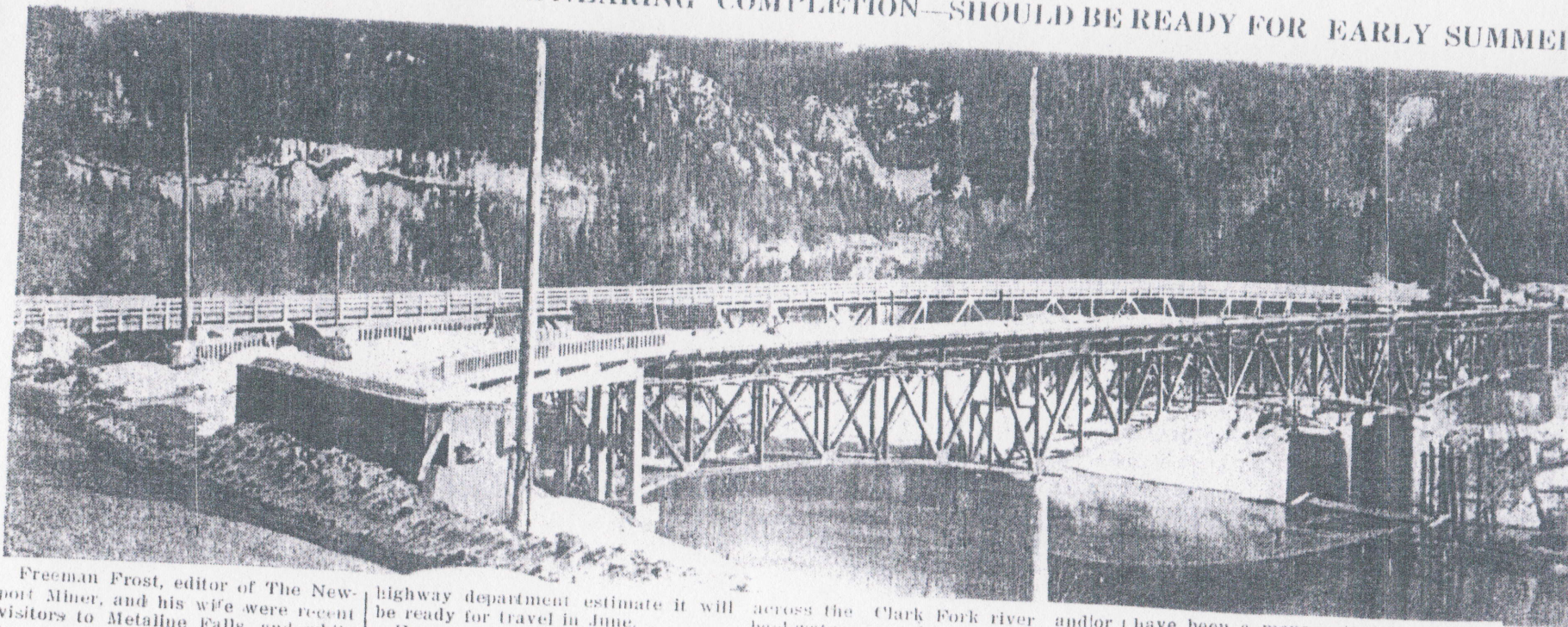
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FUTURE HERON Bridge in Background

NEW METALINE FALLS BRIDGE NEARING COMPLETION—SHOULD BE READY FOR EARLY SUMMER



Freeman Frost, editor of The Newport Miner, and his wife were recent visitors to Metaline Falls, and while here took the picture above of the new bridge under construction, which he published in his paper last week. The bridge is now estimated to be about 90% complete, and remaining to be done is the pouring of the deck and painting. Engineers for the state

highway department estimate it will be ready for travel in June.

Henry Hagman of Cashmere, contractor, took the job for \$548,615.50, but due to some changes the cost will be more. As part payment he took the old bridge shown in the background, which he has sold to Sanders county, Montana, where when taken down it will be placed at Heron

across the Clark Fork river and/or backwaters caused by the new Cabinet Gorge dam.

The new bridge itself is 520 feet long, 760 feet overall including the approaches. It will have a 26-foot roadway and a four-foot sidewalk, and has a curving approach from the west end, throwing it further away from danger of falling rocks which

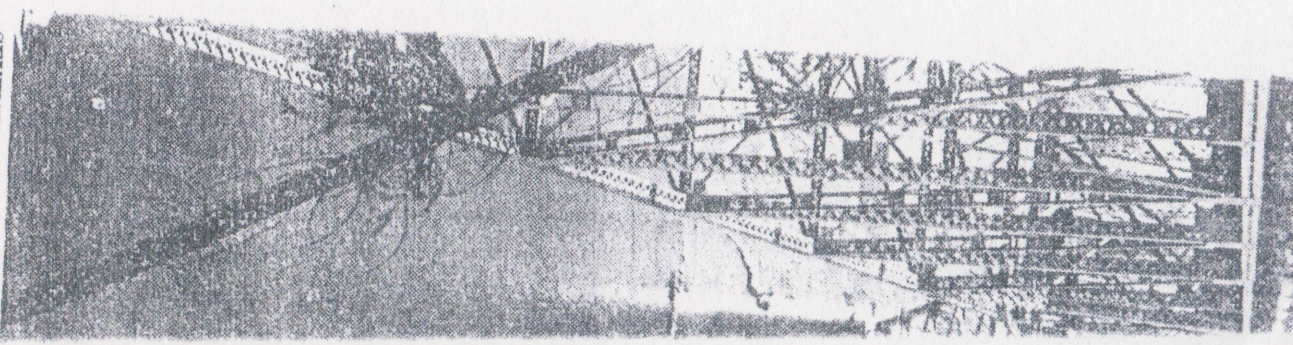
have been a menace to travelers for years. The deck will be 80 feet above low water. Shown below is the net, which was strung for protection of workmen.

Opening of the bridge to traffic will be heralded with glee by all who have been traveling the old one since it was made a one-way structure, and it will be a boon to our industries, who

have often had to detour heavy loads around over the lone bridge via Sullivan lake. Many an argument has ensued over who had the right-of-way when two cars met on the bridge and invariably someone had to back up, although there have been reports of two cars passing on it.

Say: "I saw it in The New
Miner 13-52

SEVENTY-FOOT DIVE— Joe Wheatley, 20, of Ontario, Ore., an employee at the Pend Oreille mine at Metaline Falls, is shown pushing off for a 70-foot dive from the under structure of the Metaline Falls bridge into the Pend Oreille river recently. It was his second dive of the summer—and, he adds, his last. The picture was taken by R. H. Bontrager of Metaline Falls.





METAIRIE FALLS BRIDGE c 1922 (FUTURE HERON BRIDGE)